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# Fenway-Kenmore

District Profile &  
Proposed 1978-1980  
Neighborhood  
Improvement  
Program

City of Boston  
Kevin H. White, Mayor  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Neighborhood Planning Program  
Summer, 1977

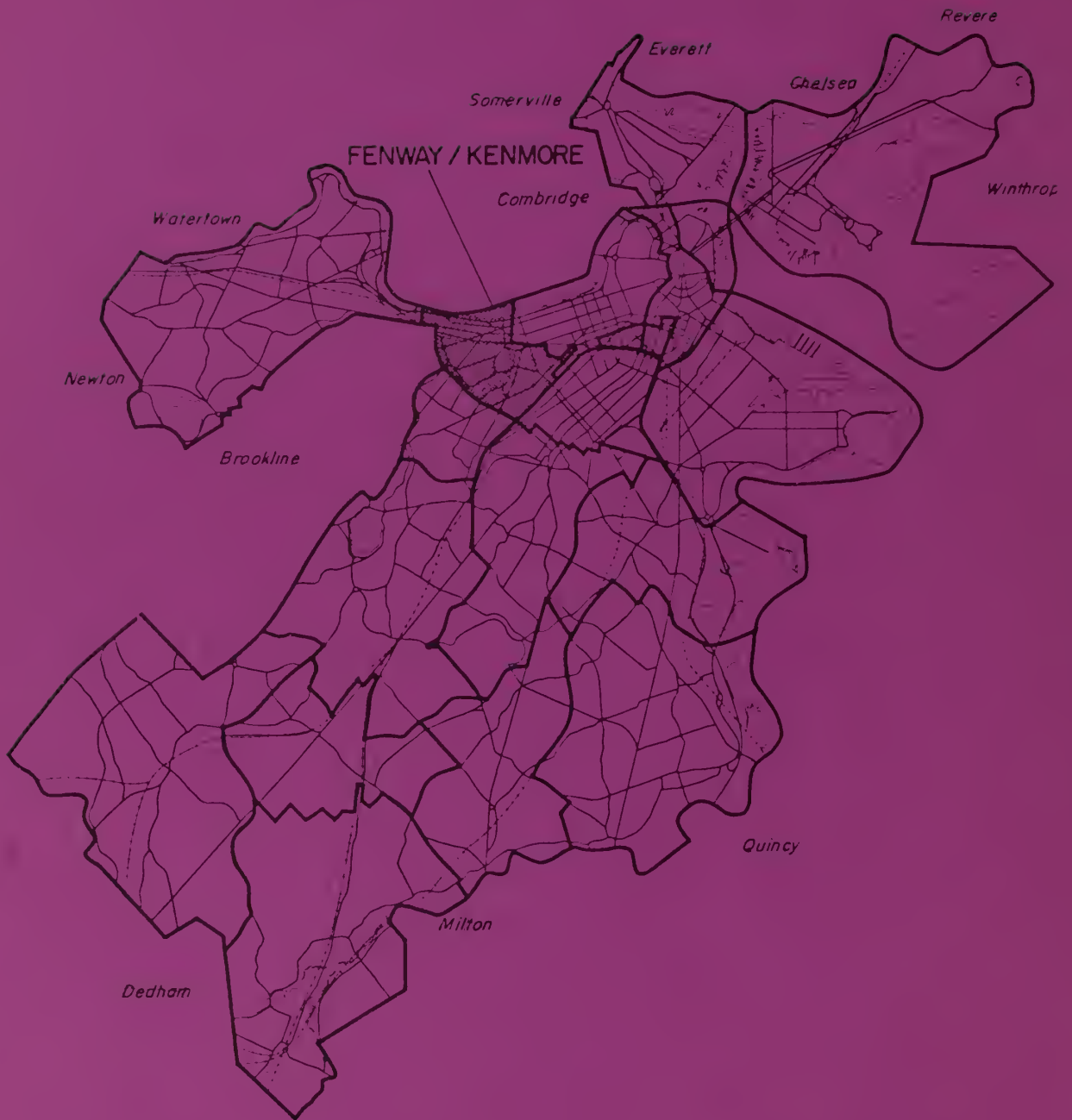
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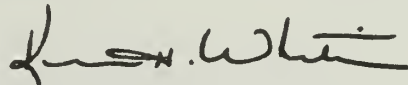
KEVIN H WHITE  
MAYOR

CITY OF BOSTON  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY HALL BOSTON

The Boston Redevelopment Authority's Neighborhood Planning Program has prepared this report to assist residents and City agencies develop longer range solutions to community-wide planning issues.

This "Neighborhood Profile" contains information which helps bring into sharp focus those matters which are of concern to residents of each neighborhood in the City. This information facilitates public understanding and assists all of us--both at City Hall and in the neighborhood--in determining how we can best use the resources available to us.

I hope this booklet serves as an important building block to encourage greater interest in the problems confronting this neighborhood and our City and help us all in developing solutions to these problems.

  
Kevin H. White  
Mayor

# Boston Redevelopment Authority

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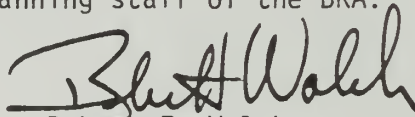
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The Boston Redevelopment Authority, as the City planning agency, is pleased to submit for neighborhood review a profile of Fenway-Kenmore.

It is my hope that the profile can serve as a starting point in the dialogue that should and must take place between neighborhood residents and public officials as decisions are made about the use of community development funds and other matters of public policy.

The decision-making process, of course, must be based on data that is up-to-date and accurate. I am confident that the material contained in this report can be of great assistance to all who care about this neighborhood in particular and the city as a whole.

Questions and comments about the material in the report should be directed to the Neighborhood Planning staff of the BRA.



Robert F. Walsh  
Director  
Boston Redevelopment Authority

This planning report, prepared by the Fenway-Kenmore Neighborhood Planner, is intended to assist local residents and City officials in defining the needs of, and programs for the Fenway-Kenmore area. It is also written to assist prospective residents and investors who are seeking information about the area.

The report includes background information, a discussion of major community planning and development issues and recommended strategies and is intended to assist in the establishment of a long-range framework for decision making by the public and private sectors.



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# 1. BACKGROUND

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## A. NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

One century ago, the problems of the Fenway-Kenmore area -- then referred to in City annals as "virtually an unusable asset" -- prompted the formation of the Boston Park Commission. The group was charged with both developing a park system for the City and solving the drainage difficulties of the Back Bay Fens, a notorious collector of sewage, swamp water and flood run-off of nearby rivers. Not until Frederick Law Olmsted was called on to review the situation three years later were both objectives accomplished in a single scheme. According to his recommendations, tidal gates were constructed, a sewage interceptor was buried in the Fens basin, and fill was placed around the conduit to create a public park. Olmsted's ingenious solution led to renewed residential and commercial development in Boston and to the westward expansion of the City. By 1920, the former mud flats along the Fens were filled completely with land, with the Fens dividing the Kenmore Square portion to the north and west from the Fenway part to the south and east.

Together with the park, two other factors were instrumental in the early development of the area: advances in mass transit and a major downtown fire. Horsecar lines, appearing around 1855, replaced the omnibus, and electric cars further improved service three decades later. Through various linkages, Kenmore Square and lower Huntington Avenue became particularly accessible by public transportation as well as by automobile on newly constructed streets and bridges. Meanwhile, the Boston Fire of 1872 led such institutions as the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Christian Science Church and the Boston Symphony Orchestra to settle near the Fens instead of the downtown in the late 1800's.

The Fenway-Kenmore area continued to attract various institutions -- educational, cultural, medical and social -- of national and local importance. Nearby, apartment buildings were constructed early this century, joining the brownstone and brick residences of the Symphony and Ruggles neighborhoods. These speculator-built apartment houses varied in quality of construction and, subsequently, in their maintenance. The slow deterioration typical of intown housing and commercial conditions during the late 1950's and early 1960's, together with the expansion needs of the Christian Science Church, led to the formation of a renewal plan by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1965. Intending to rejuvenate the area through both large-scale reconstruction and improvements to existing neighborhoods and facilities, the Fenway Urban Renewal Project concentrated its initial activities in the vicinity of the Christian Science complex. It eventually erupted into a controversy of certain residents versus planned redevelopment, with a lawsuit in the early 1970's delaying new construction and project improvements, and providing for the formation of the Fenway Project Area Committee (FenPAC), a citizen advisory group.

The portion of the district to the north and west of the Fens experienced another sort of development and decline in the century following Olmsted's improvements to the area. Kenmore Square had existed prior to the redesign of the Fens, as an annex of the downtown characterized by fine hotels, shops and professional offices. Wealthy families moved into townhouses on Bay State Road around the turn of the century, and the Peterborough and Audubon Circle areas were built up with large apartment structures by speculative developers in ensuing decades. Just south of the square, a light industrial and wholesale district flourished. The fibre of these sections has changed greatly in the past 30 years because of the dominance of Boston University and other colleges over the area, the placement of highway and railroad lines and a major sports facility (Fenway Park), and the change in locational preferences of offices and manufacturing facilities.

## B. EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

The information in this report on population and housing conditions was derived from the United States Census. Since the boundaries of the Fenway-Kenmore District differ from those of Census tracts, estimation was necessary in calculating some statistics. Due to Census tracts having been redrawn from 1960 to 1970, reliable data comparisons were impractical on any smaller scale than the full district. Another qualification to be kept in mind in examining the 1970 statistics is that half the district is an urban renewal area. Thus, because of site clearance and planned construction or rehabilitation, both demographic trends and housing conditions are probably affected by more than "normal" market forces, and the relevancy of the now-seven-year-old Census data might be less than for other districts.

Three subareas, each with distinguishing characteristics, have been delineated for the purpose of analysis in this report: Fenway, Kenmore and West Fens. Fenway is the portion of the district lying to the south and east of the Fens, including the Seven Streets, St. Botolph, and St. Germain Streets neighborhoods. Kenmore includes Kenmore Square and the Bay State Road and Audubon Circle residential areas. West Fens refers to the neighborhood just north and west of the Fens.

### FENWAY-KENMORE DISTRICT

The Fenway-Kenmore population is characterized chiefly by its young age, its low incomes and its high transiency. Because the district is the site of so many educational institutions, its population is dominated by persons in the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups. Since 1960, the percentage of these groups -- which now constitute 60% of the district's residents -- has doubled, while the proportion of all other age groups has declined. The area's total

population of about 25,000 has remained the same, while the City's has decreased by 7% from 1960 to 1970. Median incomes for families and for individuals are below City figures, and 30% of the families in Fenway-Kenmore earn less than \$5,000 a year, compared with 22% for all Boston. Transiency is another notable characteristic: only 21% of the 1970 population were in their same housing units five years earlier, versus 50% for the City.

Most of the housing stock in the district is brick or stone multi-unit structures, built about a half century ago. By either measure of density -- persons per acre or housing units per acre -- Fenway-Kenmore is significantly more built-up than the City as a whole. Three-quarters of the district's housing units are in buildings containing ten or more units, contrasted with one-fourth for the City. The district has the highest percentage of persons living in group quarters 36% (versus Boston's 5%); and even disregarding this dormitory influence, there are nearly twice as many one-person, non-group units in Fenway-Kenmore as citywide. Vacancy rates parallel those of Boston, but a greater proportion of the housing is in rental units. Owner occupancy is rare: 2% of the total units or 19% of the occupied one-to-nine-unit structures, compared with City figures of 26% and 54%.

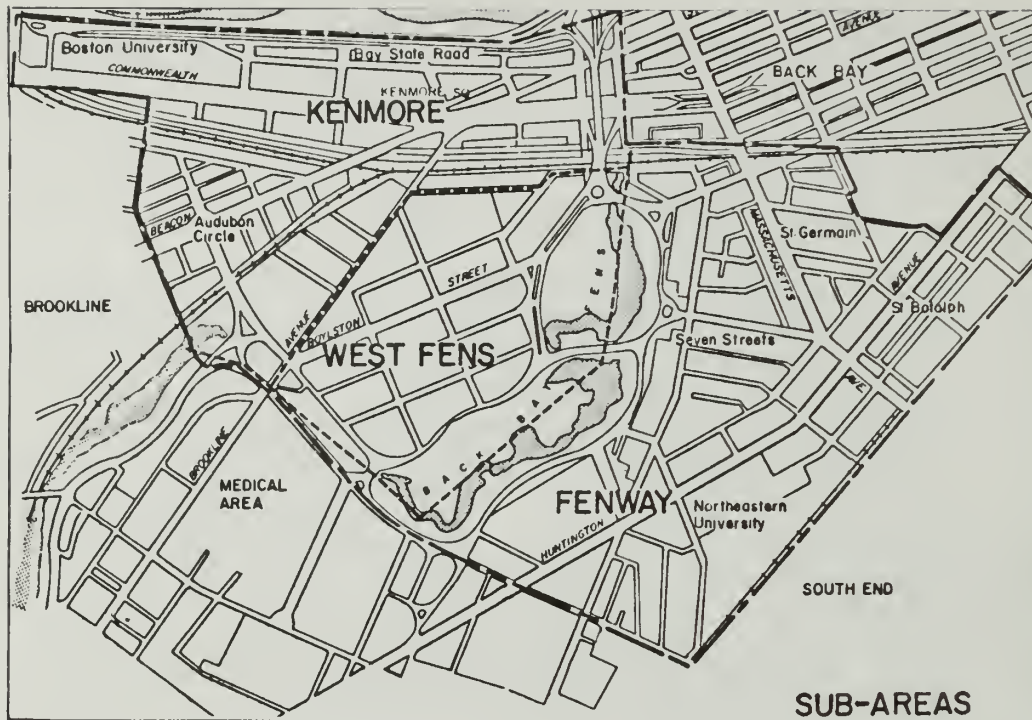
## SUB-AREAS

### KENMORE

The Kenmore subarea includes Kenmore Square itself, Boston University, and two residential neighborhoods - Bay State Road and Audubon Circle. Kenmore Square is a major vehicular traffic and transit node and a commercial district of citywide importance. In the past, the Square was a center for fine hotels. Today, many of these hotels are used as dormitories by educational institutions; and the predominance of students is reflected in the Square's many retail stores, restaurants and nightclubs. Bay State Road is a lovely, tree-lined street of well-kept brick and brownstone rowhouses. Although Boston University currently occupies a number of these rowhouses as well as a few dormitories, the street is basically residential, punctuated by the offices of a few doctors who also live in the neighborhood. Audubon Circle, near the Brookline border, is inhabited by students and young professionals as well as some families. Large apartment buildings predominate on main streets, with smaller structures elsewhere.

The Kenmore subarea, saturated more than any other section of Boston by the student influence, is populated primarily by young people attending nearby Boston University and Gramer Junior College. Persons aged 15 to 24 comprise over 80% of the population. Few families live in the subarea, and just 3% of the residents are elderly. The median family and median individual incomes are slightly below the City figures, and 26% of the families





earn less than \$5,000 a year. Group quartering exists throughout the subarea, providing housing for 63% of the population, in contrast with the City figure of 5% and the district's 36%. Although the density of the Kenmore subarea is twice that of Boston, much of the land use is nonresidential. Educational institutions own considerable property; Fenway Park occupies land near the Square; commercial structures and undeveloped lots prevail along Boylston Street and Brookline Avenue.

### WEST FENS

The demographics of the West Fens area are somewhat more similar to those of the City than are those of the rest of the Fenway-Kenmore district. While the 20 to 24 age group constitutes a high proportion (29%) of the population, 15 to 19 year olds account for only 6% of the total, in contrast to the district figure of 24% and the City figure of 10%. There is less student dominance, with group quarters accommodating only 4% of the residents. The community is chiefly one of young working people -- attracted to the area because of proximity to the Fens, downtown and cultural facilities and its moderate rents -- and of elderly residents (15%), many of whom have lived in the neighborhood all their adult lives. There is a higher percentage of families in West Fens than elsewhere in the district; their median income figure is lower than Boston's, and a greater proportion earn less than \$5,000 a year. Unrelated individuals nonetheless account for most of the total population, and they have a median income somewhat higher than the City figure.

Housing in this densely developed section has been an issue of citywide notoriety over the past decade. The stock consists almost entirely of large apartment buildings constructed about 50 years ago. About one-fourth of the 2,779 units have been under single ownership, passing from one absentee landlord to another and deteriorating rapidly in condition in the process. Although efforts are underway by tenants and developers to achieve proper rehabilitation and management of these buildings, the vacancy rate is high, the market is askew and some structures have been unoccupied for over two years. Two major adjacent land uses also have had negative impacts on the livability of the area and on the potential for residential stability: the uncertain fate of the section of Boylston Street from the Fens to Brookline Avenue, and Fenway Park, which contributes traffic, safety and sanitation problems to the neighborhood.

### FENWAY

The Fenway subarea includes three distinct residential areas (Seven Streets, St. Botolph, and the St. Germain Street area), commercial strips along Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues, and a number of major institutions (Northeastern University, Christian Science Church, Symphony Hall, Museum of Fine Arts and Wentworth Institute among them). The Seven Streets neighborhood is bounded by the Fens, Massachusetts Avenue, Huntington Avenue and Forsyth Street. Housing varies from street to street in both type and condition, ranging from large apartment buildings in deteriorated condition to well-kept rowhouses. Notwithstanding the obvious effects of real estate speculation, recent fires and the intrusion of Northeastern University and related uses, Seven Streets is struggling to establish and maintain itself as a stable, residential neighborhood. The St. Botolph neighborhood, situated between Huntington Avenue and the railroad tracks, has gone through a period of deterioration and has been revitalized through extensive private rehabilitation. It has become again a stable, residential neighborhood of mid-rise rowhouses and apartment buildings, which now calls for a public improvement strategy of preservation and improved city services rather than stabilization. The St. Germain Street area is literally in the shadow of the Christian Science Church and Prudential complexes, across Massachusetts Avenue from the Seven Streets neighborhood. This area has less of a "neighborhood" feeling than Seven Streets and St. Botolph, because of the heavy mixture of institutional uses with residences there. A major effort is now in progress to rehabilitate the residential buildings on St. Germain Street, as well as the street itself. These public and private efforts should help to promote a sense of neighborhood in this area.

The entire Fenway subarea, with the exception of the St. Botolph neighborhood, falls within the boundaries of the Fenway Urban Renewal Project. With the growth of area colleges, Fenway has acquired a great proportion (52%) of persons aged 15 to 24. The combination of students and urban renewal activity has squeezed many former older, low income residents out of the rental housing

## Comparative Statistics - Fenway/Kenmore

Population	Kenmore	West Fens	Fenway	DISTRICT	CITY
Total 1970	8,620	4,301	12,252	25,173	639,803
Change from 1960*				-3%	-7%
Black 1970	264	143	1,355	1,762	104,429
% of 1970 total	3%	3%	11%	7%	16%
% of 1960 total*				7%	9%
Aged 15-19 1970	3,362	239	2,900	6,501	60,900
% of 1970 total	39%	6%	24%	26%	10%
% of 1960 total*				12%	9%
Aged 20-24 1970	3,659	1,253	3,485	8,397	76,958
% of 1970 total	42%	29%	28%	33%	12%
% of 1960 total*				18%	11%
Aged 65+ 1970	296	652	1,785	2,733	81,437
% of 1970 total	3%	15%	15%	11%	13%
% of 1960 total*				15%	12%
Income					
Median Family	\$7,283-\$9,565	\$7,283	\$4,647-\$8,250	\$7,283	\$ 9,133
Median Individual	\$1,066-\$3,427	\$3,427	\$ 984-\$3,036	\$2,126	\$ 2,189
% Families under \$5,000	26%	30%	31%	30%	22%
Household Patterns					
Total Households	1,845	2,684	5,272	9,801	217,622
Family Households	345	706	1,209	2,260	140,966
% of total	19%	26%	23%	23%	65%
Non-Family Households	1,500	1,978	4,063	7,541	76,656
% of total	81%	74%	77%	77%	35%
Persons in group qtrs.	5,456	176	3,385	9,017	39,346
% of total population	63%	4%	28%	36%	6%
% Population in same unit 5+ years*	8%	30%	26%	21%	50%
Housing					
Total Units	1,958	2,779	5,857	10,594	232,400
Owner-occupied units	94	5	133	232	59,178
% of total	5%	0%	2%	2%	26%
Renter-occupied units	1,751	2,679	5,139	9,569	158,257
% of total	89%	96%	88%	90%	68%
Vacant units	133	95	585	793	14,966
% of total	6%	3%	10%	8%	6%
% of Total Units in:					
single unit structures	5%	1%	2%	2%	15%
2-9 unit structures	34%	1%	28%	23%	62%
10+ unit structures	61%	98%	70%	75%	23%
Units needing \$1,000 fix-up*				34%	29%
Market Condition+	Stable	Uncertain	Stable	Stable	Stable

\* Reliable data available only for district and City

+ Data source is BRA Research Department

market, though accommodations for such persons are being replaced in part by Fenway Urban Renewal Project construction. There are few families in the area. Almost 30% of the population lives in group quarters, and over three-fourths of the area's households are comprised of one person or unrelated individuals. Viewed in relation to the City and the district as a whole, incomes in the Fenway are low and transiency is high.



Substantial expenditure has also gone into the district's open space and recreational areas: construction of Morville Park and the Roberto Clemente playing fields, preparation of a master plan for landscape restoration of the Back Bay Fens, and physical upgrading of the Fens (passive areas, dredging, walk reconstruction, new water lines, pedestrian lighting). Through the Birthday Book Program, planters were installed in front of the Burbank Apartments on Edgerly Road.

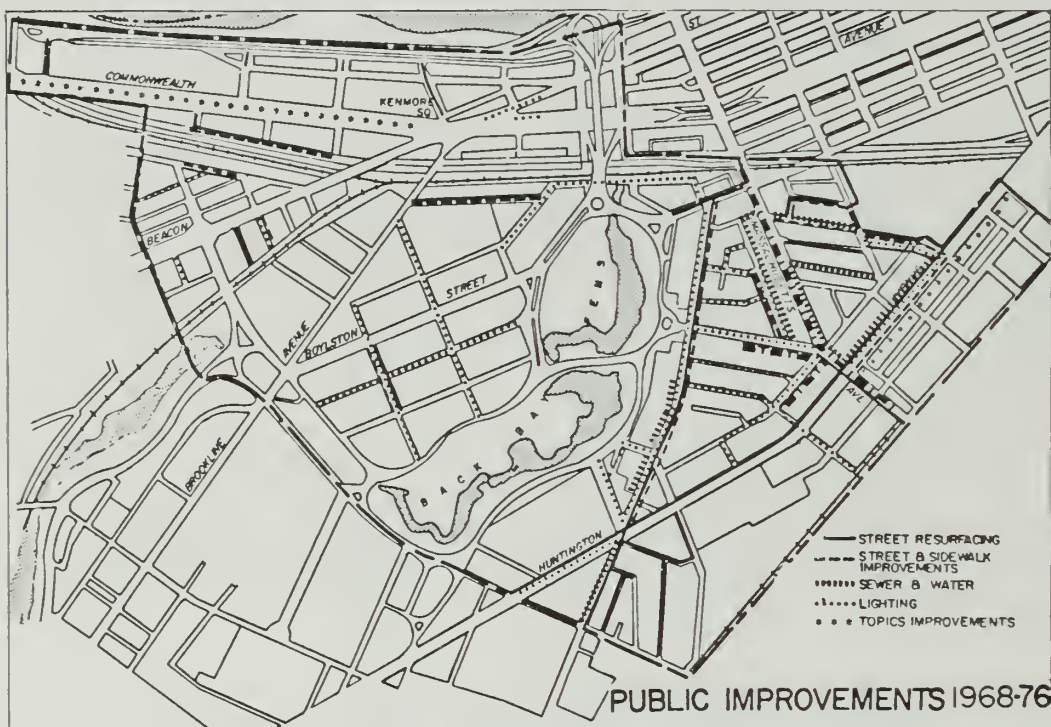
Three major transportation improvement projects have been implemented in the district within the last two years. The traffic signal system along Massachusetts Avenue was modernized and synchronized through the TOPICS Program in 1975. The following year, under the Urban Systems Program, major improvements were made to Commonwealth Avenue (Kenmore Square to Brighton Avenue) and to Huntington Avenue (Harcourt Street to Gainsborough Street). The Commonwealth Avenue project includes traffic signal modernization, minor roadway widenings, street lighting, tree planting, and other improvements for safety and beautification of the MBTA median.

Public effort in housing has been in the form of new construction, rehabilitation and leased housing. The Church Park apartments in the Christian Science complex have provided 508 units, including 127 subsidized for low-income persons and 50 for moderate-income individuals. Also in the renewal project, Morville House has provided 74 low-income and 73 moderate-income units for the elderly. Through rehabilitation, the nearby Burbank Gardens contain 13 low-income and 15 moderate-income apartments in its total of 52. Also rehabilitated were Norway Housing, providing 75 low-income units and 27 moderate rentals among its 136 units, and the Burbank Apartments, where 34 of the 173 units are subsidized. Individual units of leased housing also are scattered in residential buildings throughout the district. Last year, for the first time, the Housing Improvement Program was open to Fenway/Kenmore residents. \$70,000 was allocated to provide 20% and 40% rebates on improvements to licensed, owner-occupied lodging houses of twelve or fewer units in the district.

In recent years, the City has funded the elderly van and business district footpatrol programs (beat route varies according to direction for Little City Hall), and last year provided money for an elderly outreach program (Area II Home Care). Urban renewal money has financed the staff and operation of FenPAC, the neighborhood planning group which advises the BRA and the City on the expenditure of funds and implementation of plants within the urban renewal project area.

The most dramatic examples of private investment in the district over the past eight years have been made with Federal assistance offered through the Urban Renewal Program. They include the Christian Science Church complex, Symphony Plazas East and West (twin elderly and moderate income apartment towers now under construction at the intersection of Massachusetts and Huntington

The majority of the Fenway's housing stock is in non-owner-occupied, multi-unit structures. Because of the extraordinary costs and red tape involved in applying the Urban Renewal Rehabilitation Assistance Program ("312" loans at a low 3% interest rate) to buildings of more than 5 units, this program has not been much help in upgrading residential property in the Fenway. Similarly, the Housing Improvement Program, with its focus on small (up to 6 units), owner-occupied buildings, has not been used much in the area. Thus, with a young and transient population, minimal maintenance, and little public assistance, the Fenway's housing stock has continued to deteriorate. Because of other public improvements which are being made, however, and the large financial investment of the Christian Science Church; certain neighborhoods (such as Seven Streets and St. Botolph) are beginning to show signs of improvement, and others now offer new housing (Church Park, etc.).



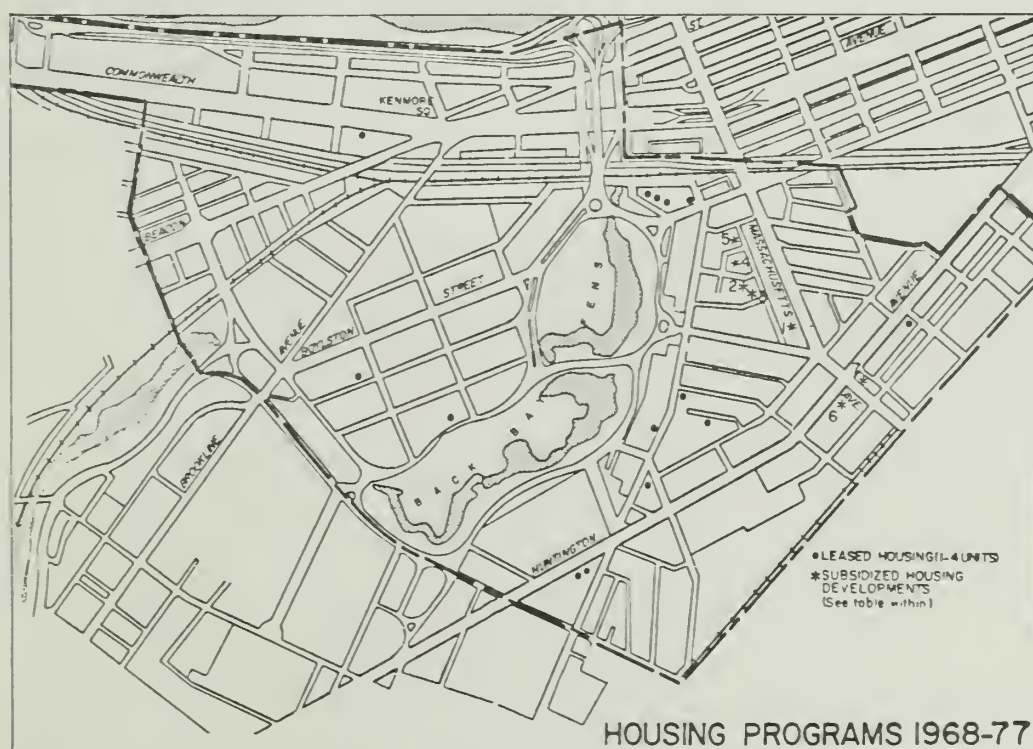
### C. PAST MAJOR PUBLIC INVESTMENT (1968-1976)

Most of the public investment made in the district in the past eight years has been concentrated within the Urban Renewal Project, for acquisition, demolition, site preparation, sewer and water work, street and alley reconstruction, sidewalk reconstruction, street lighting, tree planting, and the creation of pedestrian amenities (neckdowns, corner parklets, etc.). Public improvements, such as street resurfacing and reconstruction, street lighting, tree planting, and sewer and water work, have also been made in the West Fens and Audubon Circle neighborhoods. Public funds have also been used to plant trees in Kenmore Square, to build the Fire Department's new central alarm control station, and to renovate the Fenway Municipal Building (former Girls Trade High School).



Avenues), and the completed units of newly constructed and rehabilitated housing mentioned earlier (Church Park, Morville House, Burbank Gardens, Norway Housing and Burbank Apartments).

Other examples of private investment in the area include the rehabilitation of individual rowhouses and apartments in the St. Botolph neighborhood, the conversion of a parking garage to residential units at 12 Stoneholm Street, the rehabilitation by a community development group of apartments next to the Massachusetts Historical Commission on Hemenway Street, and the investment of concerned residents' time and money to set up the Edgerly Road Playground on vacant land owned by the BRA. Boston University has invested in tree planting and landscape improvements within its campus and in nearby areas. Northeastern University has constructed two new buildings on its campus and has recently acquired a fire-damaged building on Huntington Avenue across from the Museum of Fine Arts for rehabilitated student housing. Finally, the majority of the buildings on St. Germain Street are currently being rehabilitated for housing by a single developer. This effort will be enhanced by public improvements to the street and sidewalk.

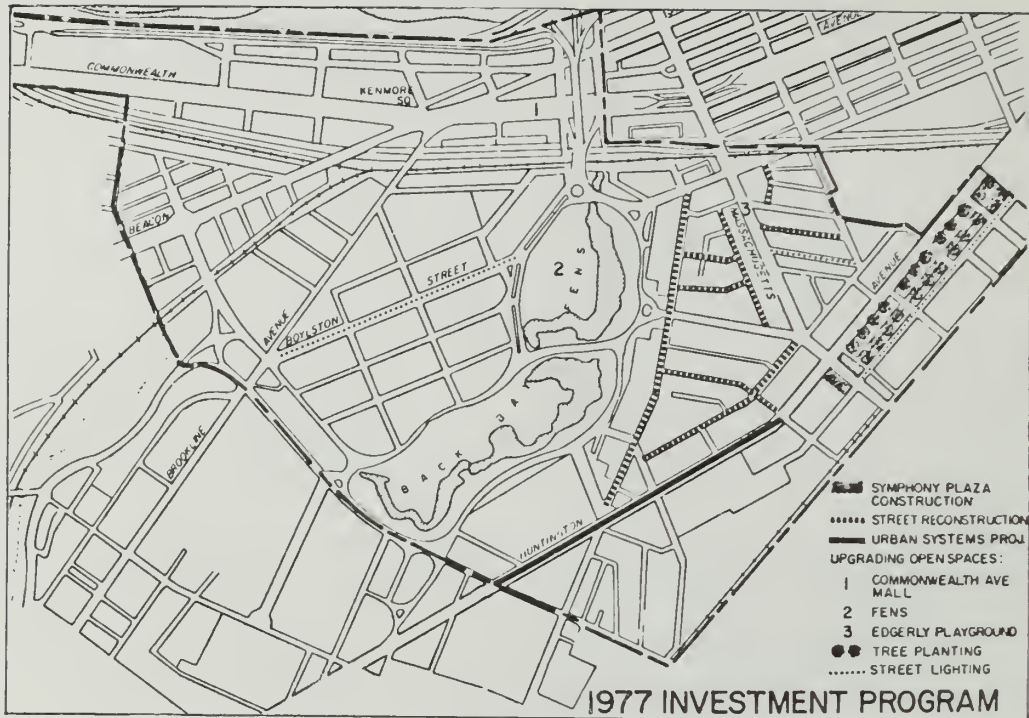


#### SUBSIDIZED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS 1968-1977

(1) Church Park-221 Massachusetts Avenue-Total units 508 (Low\*: 127 Moderate: 50) (2) Morville House-106 Norway Street-Total units: 147 (elderly) (Low: 47 Moderate: 73) (3) Burbank Gardens-31-41 Burbank Street-Total units: 52 (Low: 13 Moderate: 15) (4) Norway Housing-99-103 Norway Street-Total units: 136 (Low: 75 Moderate: 27) (5) Burbank Apartments-Edgerly Road-Total units: 173 (Low: 34) (6) Symphony Plaza East\*\*-Massachusetts Avenue at Huntington Avenue (Parcel 5)-Total units: 173 (elderly) (Low: 43 Moderate: 130) (7) Symphony Plaza West\*\*-Massachusetts Avenue at Huntington Avenue (Parcel 9)-Total units: 201 (Low: 50 Moderate: 151) (8) St. Botolph Street-Total units: 134 (elderly) (Low: 134)

\* Income levels according to Federal definitions.

\*\* Under construction.



#### D. 1977 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The 1977 investment program includes a variety of projects aimed at improving residential neighborhoods and commercial areas, upgrading open spaces, improving traffic circulation, and addressing social service needs.

Over a million dollars of Community Development Block Grant (Federal Revenue Sharing) money was allocated in 1977 for urban renewal street reconstruction and water line contracts, and for street lighting on Clearway and St. Botolph Streets. Approximately \$200,000 of the City's capital budget (long-term loans) is scheduled to be spent on street lighting and sidewalk reconstruction on Boylston Street and in the St. Botolph neighborhood. \$2,000 of CDBG money will be spent to plant 16 trees in the St. Botolph area. In order to save money (and thus plant more trees), local residents will perform some of the labor in planting and maintaining the trees. \$150,000 in City and Federal money will be spent this summer on landscape improvements to the north-eastern section of the Fens; and the City hopes to obtain a 50% grant from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to restore the Commonwealth Avenue Mall between Charlesgate and Kenmore Square (estimated total expenditure, \$300,000). Other 1977 investments in the district include refunding of the Fenway Project Area Committee (\$45,000), the police footpatrol program (\$40,000), and the elderly van (\$16,500). The second phase of the Huntington Avenue improvement project, from Gainsborough Street to Brigham Circle, will get underway in 1977. Funded under the

Federal Urban Systems program, the project includes traffic signal modernization, minor roadway widenings, street lighting, tree planting, sidewalk reconstruction, and other improvements for safety and beautification of the MBTA median. In addition to continuing ongoing street and alley reconstruction projects specified under the Urban Renewal Plan (Burbank, Hemenway, Norway, Stoneholm, Gainsboro, St. Stephen Streets, Edgerly Road, and Opera Place), this year the BRA will reconstruct the streetbed and sidewalks of St. Germain Street, and will spend \$5,000 to upgrade the Edgerly Road Playground.

New housing construction is underway at the corners of Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues. The development is called Symphony Plaza East and West and will include 374 units of low and moderate income housing and 173 units for the elderly.

## **2.** PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES/RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES (Mid- and Long-Range)

Eight major issues facing the Fenway-Kenmore district are described briefly in this section. The problems often are interrelated and their solutions complex, involving both public and private initiative. Despite the challenge, however, this area offers an enormous potential -- because of its location, existing amenities and generally solid though deteriorating housing stock -- to become a more viable urban community and a major asset to the City.

### A. RESIDENTIAL AREA UNCERTAINTIES

#### Issues

Due to a variety of factors -- including the half-century age of structures, poor maintenance, critical shifts in population and wealth -- much of the district's housing stock has deteriorated since World War II.

Problems are particularly acute in the Seven Streets and West Fens neighborhoods, where accelerated institutional expansion led to rampant real estate speculation in the sixties and early seventies. In better times, these neighborhoods housed more families than they do today, and property was owned by neighborhood residents or absentee owners interested in a solid, long-term return on their investment. The neighborhoods' populations were more varied and balanced; landlords chose tenants carefully and maintained their property; and an overall feeling of stability and confidence was shared by owners and residents alike.

A number of changes have occurred within the last two decades to dramatically alter this situation. The mid-sixties saw the onset of Urban Renewal and the Christian Science Church Master Plan. Although ultimately these programs have created new housing,



commercial and recreational facilities; the interim period has been characterized by demolition, loss of housing and commercial establishments, displacement of residents, torn-up streets and boarded up buildings.

The dramatic expansion of local institutions (particularly Northeastern University and Boston University) resulted in the loss of housing stock (as institutions bought up buildings within residential neighborhoods) and a new and expanded market for those housing units which remained. Property owners saw the opportunity to reap greater profits by catering to the increased student population. Apartments were converted to smaller units, and rent levels were raised. Buildings became overcrowded, and the neighborhood population became less balanced and more transient; as more students moved into the neighborhood, more families moved out. Rents had risen while costs (maintenance, taxes, etc.) remained about the same; consequently the perceived value of many of these buildings increased significantly. Property owners saw a chance to make an even greater profit by selling the buildings to outsiders. Many of the new owners were interested in making a large profit by turning the property over again quickly. Prices skyrocketed and real estate speculators made fortunes. Many buildings were mortgaged three or more times, but few of them were maintained. Then came the crunch. Rent control and the market itself eventually placed a ceiling on rents; at the same time costs (including maintenance, financing and taxes) rose. Property was now in the hands of "operators", many of whom were completely unskilled at managing real estate. Years of negligence had deteriorated the buildings to the extent that major rehabilitation investment was necessary; yet owners found themselves with their backs against the wall - their equity had by this point become a negative value. Banks became very cautious about financing renovations or acquisitions. Eventually tenants organized themselves and began to demand much needed repairs; city inspectors began to appear in the neighborhoods, and landlords were cited with code violations. In some instances, the result has been vacant, boarded-up apartment buildings; in other instances, buildings have burned. Some tenants have died in those fires; others have found themselves homeless. Recently, investigations have shown arson was a likely cause in several of these fires.

In other parts of the Fenway/Kenmore district, the housing situation is brighter and the problems which exist are more clear-cut. As mentioned before, about 70% of the residential buildings in the St. Botolph neighborhood have been rehabilitated through private financing. This area now has a strong, positive sense of neighborhood confidence and stability. City investment in trees and streetlights have bolstered this confidence; the housing market is strong here, and the buildings are well maintained. The housing strategy at this point should be preservation, relying on the cooperation of local officials and a strong neighborhood organization, monitoring and guiding change through the Zoning Board of Appeal and less formal means.

The buildings on Bay State Road, outside of Kenmore Square, are generally well maintained and aesthetically pleasing. Rents are fairly high here, and the population is more stable than in some other of the district's neighborhoods. For years now, however, Boston University has been buying up buildings along the street; and some long-term residents fear that their street will eventually become a part of the University's campus, and that buildings once populated by families and individuals will be turned into offices and dormitories. Outspoken residents working with the BRA through the Zoning Board of Appeal have been successful in stemming the tide to some extent. Although the City has no direct control over the purchase and sale of real estate, use of real estate is controlled through the City's zoning code. As a result of pressure brought to bear on the University through the Zoning Board, B.U. has now begun to prepare a master plan, in compliance with the Mayor's Policy Statement on Medical and Educational Institutions. This plan must be reviewed and accepted by the City, and local residents as well as City officials will have an opportunity to participate in the planning and review process. One of the City's most important objectives in this effort is to have Bay State Road strengthened and preserved as a stable, residential neighborhood.

The neighborhoods directly to the east and west of the Fens, despite their many and serious housing problems described above, have positive elements as well. Subsidies for new construction and rehabilitation, along with private investment, have added many good residential units in the Seven Streets and St. Germain Street areas (see map - Church Park, Morville House, Burbank Gardens, Norway Housing, Burbank Apartments, Symphony Plaza East and West, 12 Stoneholm Street, the Massachusetts Historical Commission property on Hemenway Street and the ongoing rehabilitation of residential buildings on St. Germain Street). Other new construction and rehabilitation projects, such as Parcels 7 and 3, are now in the planning stages. Public investment in infrastructure improvements and beautification have made the area more attractive for investment. By virtue of their proximity to downtown the abundance of recreational and cultural resources, and the real and increasing need in the City for decent rental apartments, these neighborhoods have great potential.

### Strategy

The potential of these neighborhoods can be realized through a variety of actions as described below.

### Delivery of City Services

The City should continually monitor city services with neighborhood assistance.

In a neighborhood as densely settled as the Fenway, the City and the neighborhood must continually monitor the delivery of city services such as trash collection, parking regulations, sanitary code enforcement, noise regulations and other City regulatory functions. This helps ensure that the quality of life in an area remains high. Stronger efforts must be taken to curb the various incidents of street crime and prostitution in parts of the Fenway. Experiences elsewhere in Boston and in other cities indicate success can result from constant police-community vigilance and cooperation.

### Fiscal Policy

Housing economics are quite complex. The City's property tax, assessment and abatement policies and rent control all affect housing investment and condition. The City must constantly monitor the changing market conditions in each neighborhood to ensure equitable treatment for residential properties.

Rent control is currently under evaluation by the City. Under rent control it has been difficult to adjust regulations and rents to rising fuel and maintenance costs because of the enormous task of regulating thousands of units in a neighborhood and across the City.

### Housing Rehabilitation Incentives

National and local incentives have focused primarily on owner occupied buildings. Such incentives have been available through the Federal Section 312 (loans at 3% interest) program and the City's Housing Improvement Program (HIP) which offers cash rebates equal to 20% of the value of housing code related repairs. A 50% rebate is available for elderly owners. However, very few units are owner occupied in the Fenway. Many structures were purchased during the 1960's when large urban renewal expenditures and an expanding student population attracted speculators. Many owners and banks made unrealistic investments which proved difficult to maintain as market conditions stabilized. Many unscrupulous landlords have been indicted for arson and attempted arson. Efforts are underway by the City and State to revise fire insurance laws so that destruction of property is a less attractive "last resort" and outstanding taxes are deducted from insurance settlements.

A program which would counsel and provide incentives to absentee landlords who provide quality housing and keep current on taxes should be further evaluated by the City. A program of this type would not be citywide but focus on special problem areas.

The most recent form of subsidy available to assist in the rehabilitation of multi-family housing is Section 8. This rental subsidy program has three formats: new construction, major rehabilitation, and existing. Under the first two forms, the subsidy actually



goes to the developer/owner. The prevalence of developer subsidies may in the long run contribute to the current situation, where developers and lending institutions are unwilling to invest unless a subsidy is involved. Where the promise of subsidy goes unrealized, properties can be held in an unimproved and often uninhabited condition until the subsidy is forthcoming. Thus the objective of encouraging responsible investment may actually be thwarted. The "existing" component of the Section 8 program is a variation on the basic housing allowance concept, where the subsidy goes directly to the tenant, who is then free to find decent housing wherever he or she desires. The theoretical disadvantages to this program are that it may take longer for good units to be produced in a given area, and in the meantime the subsidized tenants may move outside the neighborhood. Efforts should be made to target "existing" Section 8 subsidies to specific neighborhoods not only to reduce displacement of existing tenants due to increased rents through rehabilitation but also to insure that a neighborhood is strengthened by encouraging tenants with subsidies to seek units in well managed/maintained structures in the immediate area. The real disadvantage to the program is that it is severely underfunded. City and Federal officials should work together to obtain additional funding and to evaluate placing more of Boston's Section 8 allocation through the "existing" component, which is by far the most promising of the three for the Fenway's housing problems.

## B. KENMORE SQUARE TRANSFORMATION

### Issue

Changes in land use and population throughout the district are reflected in the recent character of its commercial areas. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Kenmore Square, which has emerged as a youth-oriented retail and entertainment center. The Square has ceased to have a reputation for prime office space, hotels and stores; even its distinction as a key transportation exchange has diminished with auto congestion and inefficient Green Line MBTA service. Kenmore Square's most notable physical characteristic, its large hotels, have been converted in some instances to dormitories by Boston University and Graham Junior College. The underutilization, poor maintenance and future uncertainty of the Graham buildings have had an additional negative impact on the area; if these properties go on the market, their reuse will be of major significance to the area.

Non-residential properties pose another problem. In upper stories of commercial structures, office space is experiencing high vacancy rates. On the lower levels, while long-term vacancies are not an issue, the mix of uses is, since it contributes to the Kenmore subarea's lack of stability, diversification and aesthetic appeal. The range and quality of goods and services are geared almost

exclusively to the tastes and incomes of the college-aged population. Fast-food establishments dominate the limited array; their signage and litter generation create much of the Square's atmosphere. The baseball games at nearby Fenway Park have other blighting effects, in the form of traffic and parking problems, crowds and litter.

In addition, the Commonwealth Avenue Mall is in poor condition, with the State air quality monitoring trailer adding to its disrepair near Deerfield Street. The MBTA Busway has divided the Square visually and has made pedestrian crossing more chaotic. Traffic continues to be a problem, parking violators are not towed, sign code illegalities abound, and trash receptacles are inadequate to meet the area's needs.

### Strategy

A comprehensive, visible program of rehabilitation is required to re-establish a sense of balance and character to this important and well-located commercial center. Both public and private investment and determination are necessary. Any public investment made in the Square is contingent upon the establishment of a strong local business organization and the exhibited willingness of those businesses to participate themselves through private investment. There have been business groups in Kenmore Square in the past; within the last year a new local group has been formed with the assistance (and promise of City support) of the Neighborhood Business District Program. Basic to the improvement of Kenmore Square is the preparation of a comprehensive study and plan for the area geared toward introducing a more permanent, balanced population. A strong first step in this direction was made within the last year as Boston University, the Red Sox, local banks and other major interests in the Square sponsored a consultant study which, with BRA assistance assembled, analyzed data and made recommendations to improve the Square's future development potential. A review process is currently being established by the BRA.

The City, for its part, has a variety of tools to upgrade the area. First, a staged program of environmental improvements should be developed, involving the rehabilitation of the mall, street trees, curbing, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, traffic flow (see Traffic and Parking section below), waste baskets, bicycle racks, benches, signage and lighting. These expenditures should be directed at improving the appearance -- and thus the livability and economic viability -- of Kenmore Square and recreating a sense of character for the area. This year the City recommended that the most dramatic short-range physical improvement, the rehabilitation of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall be included as a priority for the City's capital budget if significant support for joint public/private improvements in the Square is obtained and demonstrated. Enforcement of existing ordinances (zoning, parking, sign, sanitation) is another necessary step in upgrading the Square.



In the private domain, property owners and abutters must organize into a permanent, active, effective group. They need to decide on what image the Square should have, through realistically and thoroughly assessing the problems and potentials. The merchants, in particular, should formulate a strategy to include: (1) specifying needed public improvements, (2) emphasizing solidarity and the area's assets through promotional efforts, setting similar store hours and advertising together as a group, (3) pressuring retailers and restaurateurs to improve their facades, signs and maintenance and the goods and services they offer, (4) seeking to attract new enterprises and a broader range of uses, such as quality specialty boutiques or condominiums or professional offices, to generate more and higher-grade business. In addition to these actions, there may be major reuse or development opportunities there that could blend with upgrading and increasing residential and commercial uses in Kenmore Square.

### C. OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENT AND ACCESS

#### Issue

Fenway-Kenmore is rich in open space, notably the Olmsted legacies of the Back Bay Fens and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, which together account for about 15% of the district's acreage. Both facilities, however, have deteriorated physically and have become increasingly inaccessible because of automobile traffic and parking. In the case of the Fens, a further hazard is now the park's use and reputation as a place of criminal activity. The condition of these substantial open spaces has rendered them of minimal use to the immediate community and to the City as a whole.

#### Strategy

Most of the open space needs of the district could be met through existing facilities if major efforts were exerted in replanning, capital investment, repair and the coordination of City and regional agencies. Although City and MDC improvements have been made in the last few years, this is only a start to upgrading the park. The Fens must be re-examined and a plan for its future devised. Perhaps the most significant recent investment in the Fens is the complement within the past year of a comprehensive plan for landscape restoration. The plan has been reviewed and accepted by the community, although the critical Westland Avenue entrance to the Fens must be included in the plan (it was originally omitted). The first step toward implementation is also being taken this year - \$150,000 of City and Federal monies are being spent on improvements to the Fens' northeastern section.

The section of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall located in the district is also in need of public investment to restore its appearance and usefulness as open space. From Charlesgate West to Kenmore

Street, the Mall requires landscaping - including trees, bushes, grass, fencing, lights, hard surface, curbing, benches and trash receptacles. This year, the City recommended inclusion of the Mall in the City's Capital Budget.

Finally, in addition to upgrading and assuring safe access to these two major open space resources, the City should investigate the need for special facilities, particularly for children and the elderly, within residential sections. This year the BRA will spend \$5,000 on improvements to the Edgerly Road Playground, which is maintained by local residents and one of the few facilities for children in the neighborhood. The City should continue to work with Boston University and the Christian Science Church in planning and implementing park contributions and encourage other area institutions to make similar improvements. The City and community also ought to seek neighborhood access to institutionally owned parks, such as that of the Harvard School of Public Health in the West Fens area. Finally, planning should begin for a system of pedestrian walkways and bikeways throughout the district, including better linkage to the Esplanade along the Charles River.

#### D. DISPOSITION OF URBAN RENEWAL PARCELS

##### Issue

The Fenway Urban Renewal Plan, because of its initial emphasis on demolition and redevelopment to achieve a new image, became a heated controversy in the early 1970's. A citizens' lawsuit delayed renewal activity until the formation of FenPAC, a community group with advisory powers to the Boston Redevelopment Authority. With increased sensitivity to the wishes of present residents and with a diminished potential for federal renewal monies, the project now is concentrating on improvements to current residential and commercial areas as well as on the redevelopment or rehabilitation of key remaining disposition parcels.

##### Strategy

FenPAC, whose contract was refunded this year by the BRA, has proved to be an essential element in planning for the eastern half of the Fenway. Committee members are elected by the neighborhood and, with the able assistance of a professional planner/administrator, hold regular meetings and occasional hearings, reviewing and advising the BRA and City agencies on a wide scope of issues ranging from change in street direction to major development proposals. FenPAC works well with neighborhood groups and local officials and has helped to insure that changes slated for the neighborhood are well designed and executed in a timely manner. The BRA and the City will continue to rely on FenPAC for guidance and assistance on issues affecting the Fenway, including the future of Parcels 3, 7, 12, and 13.

Parcel 3 - is a vacant site between the Colonnade Hotel and the Midtown Motor Inn on Huntington Avenue. The Christian Science Church and a private developer have proposed unsubsidized housing which has received a favorable response from the City, BRA and local residents. The design is now under review to ensure compatibility with the renovated St. Botolph Street area and the new Christian Science complex.

Parcel 7 - is a series of structures adjacent to the Boston Arena and the site of a new transit station at Massachusetts Avenue which will be built in the next 5 years as part of the new Orange Line. These buildings are expected to be renovated with Federal Section 8 subsidies in the near future. Design review should ensure compatibility with the plans for the new station as well as any future plans for Boston Arena.

Parcel 12 - the BRA has recently decided not to acquire the structures between Massachusetts Avenue and Edgerly Road from Church Park to Haviland Street, under the urban renewal program. Efforts must now be focused on the renovation of these structures as well as Massachusetts Avenue. The BRA should convey its properties for rehabilitation and assist owners in storefront renovation efforts through its urban design department and assist owners in obtaining necessary financing. The use of low interest (312) loans should be explored.

Parcel 13 is at the corner of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue, extending to Edgerly Road and Hemenway Street. BRA and neighborhood analyses have determined that rehabilitation rather than new construction (as was originally intended for this site) would be more appropriate and feasible. The BRA should produce a "developer's kit" in the near future to solicit developer interest in a rehabilitation proposal for new housing and commercial uses. The Suffolk Franklin Savings Bank is now renovating the structure on the corner for a new bank. Boylston and Haviland Streets will be redesigned to improve its appearance and to act as an incentive to attract new private investment.

## E. TRAFFIC AND PARKING

### Issue

The heavy traffic volumes and circulation and parking problems in Fenway-Kenmore affect not only drivers and pedestrians but also the district's air quality, noise levels and open space facilities. The situation is most obvious at morning and evening commuter peak periods and when Red Sox games are being played at Fenway Park. Local streets as well as major roadways sometimes become impassable, and on game days virtually all available space -- including the Back Bay Fens and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall -- is converted to parking use, legal or not. Even without the



impact of Fenway Park, more cars than desirable park on interior streets in the Peterborough and Fenway subareas. Congestion and pedestrian hazards occur regularly in Kenmore Square and on major arterials (Massachusetts, Huntington and Brookline Avenues), where medical and educational institutions contribute to traffic and parking demands.

The roadway immediately surrounding the Fens -- Park Drive, the Fenway and Agassiz Road -- presents special problems. It has become a carrier of heavy, fast-moving, constant through traffic. As a result, pedestrian access to the park has become difficult and dangerous. In some cases, walk lights simply do not exist; in other locations, they have been left unactivated or are poorly synchronized for safe crossing or are flouted by drivers.

In Kenmore Square, the inherent difficulties of pedestrians and motorists sharing a complicated traffic interchange have been exacerbated by the MBTA's ground-level location of its bus terminal and by the inability of the underpass to attract pedestrian crossings. The Square has one of the highest intersectional accident totals in Massachusetts; because of the amount of traffic passing through and nearby on the Massachusetts Turnpike and Storrow Drive, it also has noise and air pollution problems among the worst in the State.

### Strategy

Additional expenditures and coordination among concerned public agencies are needed for further traffic and parking improvements in the district. An attempt to implement such coordination was begun by the BRA through a comprehensive circulation, pedestrian access and land use study of the area surrounding the Fens, with FenPAC and MDC officials. As a result, MDC is about to alter circulation patterns using existing streets in and around the Fens on an experimental basis. More mutual assistance and planning are needed in the future and should include the MBTA so that public transit is properly assessed as part of the solution to traffic and parking problems.

The completion of the initial phases of the TOPICS program, designed to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety on Massachusetts, Commonwealth and Huntington Avenues, will help alleviate some problems. The traffic control portion of the Massachusetts Avenue project and the pedestrian, traffic and aesthetic improvements on Commonwealth Avenue from B.U. Bridge to Kenmore Square are completed; and Phase I of the Huntington Avenue project is well underway.

The extensive improvements for Kenmore Square proposed by the BRA have not proceeded further because of funding restrictions. Among the key elements that need to be considered in improving

traffic and pedestrian conditions in the Square are circulation pattern changes, relocation of the taxi stand, enforcement of parking regulations and turning movements, new neckdowns, the reduction or removal of bus traffic at street level, improved signage and pedestrian walkways. Further exploration of the feasibility of building a parking garage for the area -- perhaps as a joint effort by the Red Sox, Boston University and other major users -- would not only improve conditions during the baseball season but also would provide parking for commercial and professional uses in and near the Square. In the interim, the creation of shuttle bus service to available parking areas (such as the Southwest Corridor clearing) or the restriction of existing parking lots to buses to discourage patrons from driving to games should be considered. The City and MDC also must intensify their ticketing and towing efforts to make the Red Sox and their customers more aware of the safety hazards and inconvenience they impose. Finally, the development of a resident sticker program would help address this and other area parking problems, including those created by Northeastern, Boston University and the medical complex, and double-parked cars in commercial areas and on arterials.

In the case of the area immediately surrounding the Fens, coordination is needed in the review and implementation of further traffic direction and capacity changes to assure a reduction of the impact of automobiles on the park. The BRA's Park-Pass proposal, designed to alleviate traffic congestion and pedestrian hazards around the Fens, should be carefully reviewed by area residents. With community support and appropriate revision, the proposal can be presented to the MDC and other government agencies and could conceivably be implemented within the next few years. Parking policies also need to be clarified and then enforced.

#### F. UPPER BOYLSTON STREET REUSE

##### Issue

The three-block portion of Boylston Street from the Fens to Brookline Avenue is an underutilized, auto-oriented commercial strip. Much of the land is occupied by one-story structures that are often vacant and by parking lots used to capacity only during the baseball season. Private reconstruction has taken place in a haphazard fashion, not serving to improve the street's appearance or to stabilize its economy. At night, the strip is deserted and dark; it has become a dangerous area.

Boylston Street's need for planned reuse is clear, but the precise nature of its rejuvenation has never been pursued to the point of an active, investor-backed proposal. One concept discussed by the BRA has involved the construction of new mixed-use structures (residential, with ground-floor retail) of 12 to 15 stories. A more

recent tentative proposal, advanced by a group of Boylston Street property owners organized as the Fenway Boylston Improvement Association, emphasizes the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the area for medical ancillary purposes -- technical supplies, sales offices, repair centers, and so on -- in combination with residences.

Zoning changes for height and density would likely be necessary for any major, intensive redevelopment of Boylston Street. Thus the reuse becomes a matter of public policy. It is also a matter of concern to the adjacent West Fens neighborhood, whose population composition, economy, environment and general character stand to be affected by changes on Boylston Street.

### Strategy

A rehabilitated upper Boylston Street, including new construction and new uses, would utilize more fully a section of prime real estate which has undergone little improvement. The residential component of such redevelopment would be critical. It must be viewed as an opportunity to reinforce the residential character of the West Fens area by providing some low- and moderate-income housing for small households, the elderly and young working people; at the same time, it might offer a way to diversify and stabilize the area by creating housing for larger families and higher-income people as well. Given the amount of potential redevelopment and the difficulties to date in preserving the West Fens neighborhood, both the City and the existing residential community must be brought into the planning process with property owners to help determine the scale and nature of Boylston Street's reuse.

## G. INSTITUTIONAL EXPANSION

### Issue

Fenway-Kenmore contains a large concentration of educational and other institutions. While these are in many ways assets to the City, they also have serious negative impacts, particularly on nearby residential sections. The inherent conflicts between institutional and neighborhood uses have been exacerbated by rapid, uncontrolled expansion of Northeastern University, Boston University and others over the past two decades. The resultant problems include excessive demands on City services, roadway and parking capacities; changes in the size and character of the housing stock; residential blight from the impacts of illegal quartering, building conversions, noise, poor maintenance and transiency; the nontaxability of property; incompatible land uses; obsolete or underutilized buildings and facilities.

### Strategy

Policy guidance and coordination can encourage more orderly growth and consolidation of institutions and can minimize the



undesirable effects of their presence. The City's major tool is review of land use, density and design through the zoning code and appeal process. Two zoning amendments proposed by FenPAC are now under consideration by the Zoning Commission. If adopted, these amendments would make virtually all institutions conditional uses in the Fenway, and their acquisition, conversion and use of property subject to City approval and provisos.

The City already exercises some measure of control over medical and educational institutions through the Mayor's policy statement of September 1970 to "assure that such development is in the best interests of both the immediate neighborhood and the City."

Based on this policy statement, the City should require that any future land use changes or building conversions by educational institutions be accompanied by a master plan agreed on by the school and the City prior to the approval of zoning variances and licensing requests. Generally, these institutions should not encroach into residential areas; should provide for a reasonable proportion of the housing, parking and transportation needs of their students; should make payments to the City sufficient to support the municipal services they require; should provide and promote programs and facilities to adjacent residential communities; should improve the appearance of their physical plants and make open space amenities available to the public. Finally, if any of the schools move or close, the City must take initiative in seeing that the released land and buildings are reused so as to improve the residential quality and stability of the district.

Major progress was evidenced this year by the creation of a memorandum of agreement between FenPAC and Northeastern University. Under the terms of this agreement, Northeastern will seek FenPAC's review and approval before acquiring, converting, occupying or divesting itself of property within or adjacent to the mutually-defined neighborhood area. Northeastern also made strides this year toward successful completion of a master plan. Boston University is just now beginning its master planning process.

## H. HUMAN SERVICES

### Issues

Because of the composition of the Fenway-Kenmore population, there is a need for a variety of human services. The area is home to an unusually high proportion of people who live alone and without nearby family ties, and who because of these and other factors (age, poor nutrition, psychological alienation, declining employment opportunities, inadequate living conditions) require a wide range of accessible, inexpensive services. The needs of the elderly, comprising 11% of the district population, are particularly acute because of fixed income and declining health.

## Strategy

In 1976, the City has responded by funding a minibus for elderly transportation and an elderly outreach program (Area II home care). These programs should continue to be funded, and the City should continually monitor service needs in Fenway/Kenmore and should offer assistance to community groups in planning and securing funding for programs and facilities. It is important to note, however, that there are very strict regulations governing the expenditure of CDBG money for social programs. The block grant is intended to fund "brick and mortar" projects; to be funded, human service programs must directly and specifically support capital investment in the area and must have been refused financial assistance from other sources. City funding for social programs should be viewed as a last resort.

### **3.** PROPOSED THREE YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (1978-1980) AND LONGER RANGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES

The proposed three-year improvement program for Fenway/Kenmore is designed to upgrade and preserve the area's residential neighborhoods, commercial centers and recreational resources. A combination of public investment, private investment and public policy is needed.

Program recommendations were made assuming the continuation of recent funding levels. Citywide efforts must be made, however, to improve funding levels through increased Federal, State and local aid. The City faces tremendous burdens based on the uncertainty of the municipal bond market, the inequitable tax structure in Massachusetts, and cutbacks at the State and Federal levels. Because of the scarcity of available funds, the City must continue to utilize a variety of resources to coordinate neighborhood preservation efforts and to maximize the leveraging of private investment.

## HOUSING

Preservation and improvement of the district's housing requires strong public policy and substantial public and private investment. The basic strategy is three-fold: (1) to gain control over immediate problems (fires and housing disinvestment, unchecked institutional expansion), (2) to encourage responsible investment, and (3) to establish and maintain neighborhood confidence and stability.

1. A continuation of efforts, through changes in the zoning code, to reduce the conversion of residential property to institutional use.
2. A continuation of efforts to reduce, through legislation, the use of fire insurance as a disinvestment mechanism of "last resort."



3. Constant monitoring, by the City, of housing market conditions to assess the effect of tax assessment and abatement policies and rent control.
4. Constant monitoring of city service delivery to ensure a quality residential environment.
5. Continuation of the Section 312 loan and HIP programs in the Fenway-Kenmore area.
6. Development of a program which would involve counseling and rehabilitation incentives for responsible absentee property owners in problem areas.
7. Targeting of Federal rehabilitation subsidies to assist lower income residents in danger of dislocation due to renovations for higher rents and also to promote the rehabilitation of units in poor market areas.

## COMMERCIAL AREAS

### Kenmore Square Revitalization Plan

In the next three years a consensus plan should be developed and implementation underway through public/private cooperation. A planning process is in its initial stages with local residents, business people and the BRA, as the City's planning agency (see Kenmore Square, 11-B), and Traffic and Parking, 11-E, sections for a discussion of preliminary improvement needs).

Upgrading Kenmore Square should involve the re-landscaping of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, new street furniture and pedestrian amenities, a study of the traffic, parking and pedestrian access problems, enforcement of the sign code and detailed assessment of new development concepts, particularly for residential uses.

Improvements in the district's open spaces and their accessibility must involve investments in the Fens and mall facilities. A study of additional needs in open space for residents -- particularly the elderly and young children -- should be made and new smaller parks provided if warranted.

Adjacent to the Fens and mall, traffic and parking problems must be investigated and improvements begun. Similar studies and improvements must be continued or initiated for Kenmore Square, major arterials and the particular difficulties created by the Red Sox games.

### UPPER BOYLSTON STREET

A joint planning study should be undertaken by the BRA in the next three years with the cooperation of local residents and business people to detail future land use concepts for the area and the steps necessary to realize an improvement program.

The appropriate reuse of Boylston Street could in the future require City investment for land acquisition and infrastructure. Whether large-scale reconstruction or chiefly rehabilitation is involved, the street will require substantial improvements, including sewer and water works, street and sidewalk repair, trees, lights and street furniture.

The street is now a jumble of low intensity uses but has potential for new development which could include residential, office and commercial uses. The proximity of the area to the Medical Area, the Fenway institutional area, and Fenway Park makes it suitable for an improvement program for higher intensity uses.

### OPEN SPACE/RECREATION

In the next three years, the renovation of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall should be completed. The historic lighting now on lower Commonwealth Avenue should be extended through the Charlesgate West area to the beginning of Kenmore Square.

In 1977-1978, the BRA and the Parks and Recreation Department are jointly reviewing existing open space facilities and needs and will recommend future improvement programs to be undertaken by the City, the State (MDC) as well as large institutions (universities, churches, etc.).

### FENWAY URBAN RENEWAL PLAN COMPLETION

(See Issues and Strategies Section for a more detailed discussion)

### Major Projects

1. New housing on Parcel 3 (between Colonnade Hotel and Midtown Motor Inn) - design review on-going.
2. Rehabilitation proposals for Parcels 7, 12 and 13 are in various stages of implementation. In conjunction with Parcel 12 and 13, improvement programs for existing storefronts and the portions of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street adjacent to these sites must be undertaken and implementation measures funded.

### BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Robert L. Farrell, Chairman

Joseph J. Walsh, Vice Chairman

James G. Colbert, Treasurer

James K. Flaherty, Assistant Treasurer

James E. Cofield, Jr., Member

Kane Simonian, Secretary

Robert F. Walsh, Director

---

Roy Bishop, Director, Neighborhood Planning Program

Deborah Fawcett, Fenway-Kenmore Neighborhood  
Planner (resigned)

FENWAY KENMORE  
FUTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS as related to Issues, strategies and 1977 Investment Program

ISSUE	STRATEGY	1977 INVESTMENT PROGRAM	PROPOSED 1978-1980 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
Residential Area Uncertainties	Gain control over immediate problems (unchecked institutional expansion; fires & housing disinvestment)	Guide changes in institutional use of property through zoning & Mayor's Policy Statement in medical & educational institutions	Continue ongoing efforts, with neighborhood cooperation
		Effort to revise fire insurance policy	Continue ongoing efforts
	Encourage responsible investment	Availability of federal low interest (312) loans	Availability of 312 loans & Housing Improvement Program Reates
		Evaluation of rent control. Evaluation of current rehabilitation incentives and their effectiveness	Increase Section B assistance directly to tenants ("Existing Housing" Program component), investor owner counseling.
			Revise assessing & abatement policies & procedures
	Establish & maintain neighborhood confidence & stability through capital improvements & improved city maintenance & service delivery	Urban Renewal Project street & alley reconstruction, street lighting (Clearway, St. Botolph, Boylston); tree planting (St. Botolph); rehabilitation of open space (Fens, Commonwealth Avenue Mall, Elderly Playground); footcatal, elderly van	Necessary public improvements (Fens restoration); continue footcatal, elderly van & improve city maintenance & service delivery.
Kenmore Square Revitalization	Organization of active civic group	Technical assistance from the City through Neighborhood Business District and Neighborhood Planning Programs	Continued technical assistance from the City
	Code enforcement (signs, parking, zoning, sanitary), advise merchants on improved signage & facade treatment	Organize series of meetings on Kenmore Square (BRA)	Coordinated effort among civic group, BRA, LC, Building Department, Parks Department & Police, inspection and prosecution of violators
	Improve image of Square through public improvements	Rehabilitation of Commonwealth Avenue Mall	Sidewalk reconstruction; bike racks, other pedestrian amenities.
	Short-term, low-cost circulation & safety improvements (e.g., better vehicular signage, relocate taxi stand, reduce parking meter intervals)		
	Long range improvements to reduce traffic in Square, increase pedestrian safety & access, deal with parking problems and encourage new residential commercial development.	Kenmore Square Study (BRA)	
Open Space Improvement & Access	Rehabilitation of Back Bay Fens & improvement of access	Completion of Fens Master Plan; \$150,000 for improvements to Northeastern section	Substantial, staged investment to restore & maintain Fens, according to master plan with MHC; implement vehicular & pedestrian circulation improvements (Park Pass).
	Rehabilitation of Commonwealth Avenue Mall	City commitment of \$150,000 (to be matched by BCR) for landscape restoration	Towing of parked cars; improved maintenance program
	Development of other open space areas	BRA improvements to Elderly Road Playground - \$5,000	Analyze additional open space needs and opportunities (BRA Parks Department).
Disposition of Urban Renewal Parcels	Development of remaining disposition parcels	Site preparation work, ongoing reuse studies and reviews for Parcels 3, 7, 12 and 13	With FenPac, plan disposition and development of remaining parcels; additional site prep work and rehabilitation.
Boylston Street Reuse	Redevelop upper Boylston Street	Encourage local planning process with residents, businesses and BRA	Prepare development guidelines; street & sidewalk improvements; financing for land acquisition or write-down (as required by development program)
Institutional Encroachment	Policy guidelines and coordination to minimize negative impacts and promote benefits to neighborhoods and city	Work with Northeastern and Boston University on master planning efforts.	Continue joint planning efforts with M.U. and B.U.
Human Services	Assist in meeting community needs	Elderly van - \$16,500	City review of human service needs, continuation of ongoing programs, further assistance as needed.

